

**DRAFT WASTE STRATEGY**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce to members the draft waste strategy document, as well as updating on the overall context for, and potential future changes to, waste services.
- 1.2 There are three future changes which need to be considered in developing Argyll and Bute's Waste Strategy. These are: the impending landfill ban; the new deposit return scheme; and the end of the private contract with Renewi for waste disposal services in much of Argyll and Bute. These impending changes provide a real opportunity to look at waste differently, and make the development of a new waste strategy both an imperative as well as a real challenge. This is a complex and significant piece of work for the Council.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Draft Waste Strategy for public consultation; and
- Note the timeline at 4.4.1 and approvals process for the production of the Final Waste Strategy; and
- Note the significant work to date in progressing this complex piece of work.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This report introduces the Draft Waste Strategy for members to consider; and seeks approval of the document to form the basis of a public consultation. This is a hugely significant document for the Council and its customers, with long-term financial and service delivery implications.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to:

- 3.1 Approve the Draft Waste Strategy for public consultation; and
- 3.2 Note the timeline at 4.4.1 and approvals process for the production of the Final Waste Strategy; and
- 3.2 Note the significant work to date in progressing this complex piece of work.

**4.0 DETAIL**

**4.1 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1.1 Argyll and Bute Council is responsible for collecting and then disposing of household waste on behalf of its customers across the Council area. In order to provide this vital service across a large and diverse geographic area, a variety of models are in place, which balance local circumstances and needs against the Council's wider obligation to provide best value for the public purse.
- 4.1.2 The Council empties all household waste bins for Argyll and Bute's 47,000 households, as well as most of the recycling bins. In some areas, we have partnerships in place with local social enterprises who provide recycling collection services on our behalf.

4.1.3 Once the waste is collected, there are different models for its disposal:

**Islands (Tiree; Islay; Jura; Mull; Iona; Coll; and adjacent small isles)** – The Council owns and operates its own waste disposal sites on some of our larger islands;

**Mainland and other islands** (excluding Helensburgh and Lomond) – On the mainland we have a contract in place with Renewi (formerly known as Shanks) who provide waste disposal services on our behalf. This contract runs until 2026;

**Helensburgh and Lomond** – The waste from this area is disposed of at private sites outwith Argyll and Bute

## 4.2 FUTURE CHANGES

4.2.1 There are three major changes on the horizon which will fundamentally change the picture for waste services in Argyll and Bute, which mean that developing a new waste strategy is imperative:

**Ban on biodegradable municipal waste (BMW)** – in January 2021 the Scottish Government is introducing a ban on BMW waste going to landfill. This means that all biodegradable waste (such as food waste, garden waste, paper and cardboard) cannot be disposed of in landfill. In effect this ends landfill as a method of disposing of waste. At the moment, in some parts of the Council area, we send biodegradable items to landfill. This change will have significant cost implications for the Council as we will have to find an alternative way to dispose of waste, and it remains to be seen whether we will receive any additional funding from the Scottish Government to help us do this. In particular, the cost implications for the waste service on islands are potentially huge because of the need to transport waste off islands.

**End of waste disposal contract with Renewi** – in 2026, the Council's contract for waste disposal with Renewi will come to an end. In advance of the contract ending, we will need to look at the best model for waste disposal in the future, and in doing so consider in detail a range of options, from in-house waste disposal to a private contract, with various models in between. In doing so we will have to balance the need to provide a high quality service which complies with our legal responsibilities against what is cost effective and sustainable for the Council in the changing financial landscape.

**Deposit return scheme for drinks containers** – The Scottish Government announced in 2017 that it would be looking to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for Scotland. This proposal has gone out to public consultation, and at present we are awaiting the results of this exercise, and clarity on the next steps. It is too early to say what the implications of this might be for the Council, however, a particular risk for noting at this stage is that, if it is determined that Local Authorities should operate the scheme on behalf of the Scottish Government, this could have cost implications for the Council.

- 4.2.2 With these changes in mind, we need a waste strategy which will provide an overarching framework which will allow the Council to continue to provide high quality and cost effective waste services on behalf of the people of Argyll and Bute, while at the same time complying with the new requirements being introduced by the Scottish Government. As well as looking at solutions to the coming challenges, any strategic review should also look, in general terms, at how we can provide better, more efficient waste services for our customers.
- 4.2.3 To provide additional context, the Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan includes the following targets, which increase national recycling targets in stages:
- 50% recycling/composting from households in 2013;
  - 60% recycling/composting from households in 2020;
  - 70% recycling/composting from households in 2025, and no more than 5% of all waste going to landfill.
- 4.2.4 Argyll and Bute's overall recycling figure for 2018 was 48.1%. This is up on previous years, and can mainly be attributed to the change to three-weekly bin collections as well as changing national attitudes to recycling.
- 4.2.5 The main objectives of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012, and this provides the main legislative context for the delivery of the Council's current waste services:
- The provision of local authority recycling services to domestic properties (free of charge) and businesses (chargeable);
  - The separate collection of recyclables;
  - Food waste collection to domestic properties (although there is a rural exemption for this);
  - Landfill bans by 2021.
- 4.2.6 The Scottish Government signalled its intentions clearly in the 2015 consultation exercise 'Making things last: Consultation on creating a more circular economy in Scotland'. Among other things, the consultation included a proposal to *"review the rural exemption for food waste in the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 in partnership with local government as part of the process to support the proposed Household Recycling Charter, as well as businesses and the waste management sector."*
- 4.2.7 At present the Council only offers separate food waste collection services in Helensburgh and Lomond because of its high population density. It is not currently considered to be cost effective to do this elsewhere, and the Council is not, at this stage, required to offer this service across the board.
- 4.2.8 The BMW ban in its presently proposed format has no rural or island exemptions, with the result that it is, in effect, a one size fits all policy which does not take into account the particular circumstances of rural and/or island local authorities such as Argyll and Bute.

- 4.2.9 The new Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 imposes a duty on public bodies to have regard to island communities in carrying out its functions and makes provision for those relevant authorities to carry out island impact assessments in relation to policy, strategy and service which, in the authority's opinion is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities. What this means in practice is that Scottish Ministers, local authorities and others are required to consider the particular context of islands when carrying out their functions.
- 4.2.10 Given the potentially huge cost implications for the Council associated to the BMW ban as outlined at 4.2.2, it was agreed at an Officer-level meeting of other rural and island authorities that Argyll and Bute Council would take the lead in preparing a request to Scottish Ministers for a retrospective island impact assessment to be undertaken on the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012. It is the view of Officers that in making such a request it subsequently binds the Scottish Government to considering the specific implications for island communities, and by extension island local authorities, in complying with the blanket BMW ban as currently proposed. At present this island impact assessment process is not yet in place, however, our request for this assessment has been prepared and is ready for submission once there is clarity from the Scottish Government on the process.
- 4.2.11 The Council's preferred approach with the Scottish Government is to seek additional funding to meet the additional costs of complying with the BMW ban. If the additional compliance costs are not met by an enhanced level of central government funding then the Council will look to secure either total or limited (Island/Rural) derogations from the terms of BMW ban.
- 4.2.12 Both rural and island local authorities have expressed concern about the implications of the BMW ban for their areas, and through COSLA, discussions are ongoing with the Scottish Government about whole or even partial exemptions on islands. A joint Scottish Government/COSLA working group has been created and is due to meet in February with the aim of identifying how best the Scottish Government can support local authorities to meet their obligations in terms of the BMW ban.
- 4.2.13 At present it remains to be seen what form the BMW ban will take, however, what is certain is that there are significant changes on the horizon for waste collection services throughout Scotland, and ignoring these changes – failing to comply with new laws, or failing to prepare for these new laws coming in – is simply not an option. The lack of clarity on the currently proposed future changes to waste services makes the development of an over-arching waste strategy difficult but imperative.

### 4.3 WHAT THE NEW WASTE STRATEGY WILL DO

#### 4.3.1 The new Waste Strategy will:

- align with national policy objectives;
- provide solutions for future disposal of BMW across the Council area (there could be different solutions in different places);
- produce an education and communications plan to promote the benefits of redistribution and re-use over disposal;
- explore innovative new schemes for further redistribution and re-use options beyond those which currently exist;
- carry out an options appraisal to identify the most cost effective options to divert waste from landfill;
- provide details on the implementation of the new Deposit Return Scheme, as well as an analysis of its potential effects.

### 4.4 WASTE STRATEGY DELIVERY TIMELINE

#### 4.4.1 The current intention is to have the Waste Strategy document finalised by September of this year, ready for implementation. Key dates are as follows:

DATE	ITEM
February 2019	Submission of the first Draft Waste Strategy
March 2019	Member Development Presentation
March 2019	Approval of Draft Waste Strategy for Public Consultation
April 2019	Release of the Draft Waste Strategy on the website for a six week Public Consultation
June 2019	Analysis of responses to the consultation
June 2019	Preparation of Final Waste Strategy
August 2019	Member Development Presentation
September 2019	Submission of Final Waste Strategy and Financial Business Cases to EDI Committee for consideration then onto the next available P&R/Council meeting for consideration and ratification.
September 2019 to February 2020	Implementation Phase
July 2020	Scottish Government Deposit Return Scheme roll out (target date)
January 2021	BMW ban comes into force
May 2024	PPP contact intentions reporting deadline
May 2026	PPP contract end date

## **4.5 CONSULTATION**

- 4.5.1 The Draft Waste Strategy will be available on the council's website for a six week consultation period commencing in April, which will be promoted through social media. Details will also be provided to all Community Councils.
- 4.5.2 Existing partners, contractors and third sector groups involved in waste management will be invited to respond.
- 4.5.3 Community Planning Partners will also be invited to contribute their views.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Council has the opportunity, in light of impending changes to both local provision and national legislation, to develop a new waste strategy which will allow high quality and cost effective waste services to continue across Argyll and Bute. This new waste strategy, when adopted by the Council, will have significant implications both for the Council and its customers. Members are invited to consider this draft document with a view to making it available for public consultation.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy – the Waste Strategy, when adopted, will set the Council's policy position in terms of waste services
- 6.2 Financial – the finalised waste strategy will include costed models. There will be future financial implications for the Council
- 6.3 Legal – the Council will be required to comply with any new national legislation regarding waste services
- 6.4 HR – none know
- 6.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty – as part of requirements under the Fairer Scotland Duty the Draft Waste Strategy and its outcomes were assessed through an Equalities Impact Assessment
- 6.6 Risk – none known
- 6.7 Customer Service – none known at this time

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12/2/19

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Draft waste strategy